

Agenda Item 6.4 Promoting the Health of Refugees and Migrants

GHC supported by AAP commends the development of the global action plan. The plan should ensure that all children are able to access affordable healthcare, which for migrant children may mean addressing fears of deportation, language barriers, and confusion about eligibility as well as the provision of trauma-informed care. Interpreters should be provided as necessary and feasible. Recognizing that many immigrant families may be reluctant or unable to travel to health care facilities in order to access care, efforts to bring health care to immigrant communities, such as at houses of worships or schools, should be enhanced. Collaboration should be encouraged between health care providers and other local service providers, including experts who can help migrants to navigate social, economic and legal challenges. Migrant children may also require additional support to access culturally appropriate early education and integrate into public schools. Systems of care must also address the needs of children and adolescents with disabilities.

We commend the attention to mental health. While many immigrant children are resilient and well adjusted, the experiences of some may interfere with critical stages of intellectual, social, emotional and physical development. Children should be kept with their families. Disruption to families and education, as well as the experience of witnessing traumatic events, compound developmental concerns. Mental health assessments of children in immigrant and refugee families should cover screening for trauma, the influence of acculturation, consideration of changing social support structures and resilience. Mental and primary healthcare services should be co-located when practical, and if not, then a referral system should be established. CHWs may be able to identify children in need, link them to services and improve engagement in treatment.